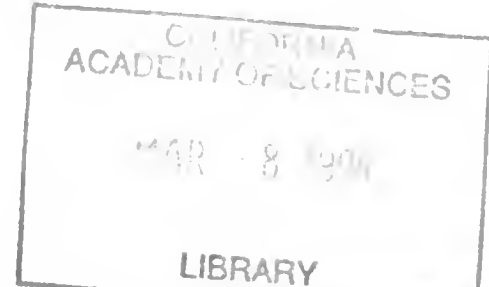




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Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter
Volume 76 • No. 3 March 1994

The Gull

GGAS Sponsors Symposium on Naval Air Station

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The decision to close the Alameda Naval Air Station (ANAS), while not unexpected, was an economic bombshell to the city of Alameda as well as the entire East Bay. Committees have been formed and plans are being put forth on how to use (i.e. develop) the land being vacated by the Navy. The local newspapers have covered this aspect of the closure quite well. What hasn't been covered quite so well is the incredible richness of wildlife which presently inhabits the Air Station and which will have to be provided for in any planning process.

The Naval Air Station is not a pretty place but it is off-limits to the general public and this is perhaps what makes it so attractive to a wide variety of species. It is home to the only successful California Least Tern colony north of Santa Barbara. The California Least Tern, a federally-listed endangered species, is declining throughout its range (California and western Mexico), but our local colony is expanding. Also found at ANAS is the Bay Area's largest breeding colony of Caspian Terns; the largest Brown Pelican roosting site; and the second largest Western Gull breeding colony. Nesting there

are the increasingly rare Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Harrier and Snowy Plover. Harbor Seals feed and haul out at ANAS and many other bird and mammal species use the rich tidal marsh and open space as habitat.



The closure of the ANAS means that decisions must be reached as to the extent of open space that is to be preserved for these wildlife species. Such decisions should be based on

sound scientific knowledge. To that end, Golden Gate Audubon Society and the College of Alameda are hosting a scientific symposium on the closure of the Alameda Naval Air Station. Speakers will include Barbara Massey, MS, and Carolee Caffrey, PhD, the preeminent scientists studying Least Terns. Also participating will be Stephen F. Bailey, PhD, Chris Kitting, PhD, and Dianne Kopek, PhD, who along with six other scientists will address the other wildlife species to be found at ANAS.

The Symposium will take place on Saturday, March 12, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the College of Alameda. Attendance is free and open to the public. The college cafeteria will be open for lunch for conference attendees.

Wetlands on the Line Again

Congress once again threatens our wetlands with disaster. The Senate sub-committee version of the Clean Water Act (S.1114) has incorporated the Baucus-Chafee wetlands bill, an abomination which will allow our precious and disappearing wetlands to be nibbled and gnawed and gobbled in great chunks.

The bill would:

1. allow local governments and agencies ("management entities"), which are far more susceptible to political pressure than are federal agencies, to regulate wetlands.
2. provide federally-funded "mitigation banks" which would finance newly-created wetlands to replace existing wetlands which are destroyed. Clever as we are, we have yet to create a man-made wetland that functions as well as a natural one does.
3. adopt a goal of "no overall net loss of wetlands" within a watershed. Local "management entities" would establish the number of acres of wetlands for a given watershed and development would be allowed as long as the total wetlands acreage was maintained. This plan would not allow for any increase in wetlands acreage (if a refuge restored 200 acres of wetlands, the door would be opened to destruction of another 200 acres of wetlands without any mitigation being necessary) and again ignores the value of natural over man-made wetlands.
4. transfer responsibility for determination of wetlands on agricultural lands from the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA to the Soil Conservation Service, an agency that has been assisting farmers for generations and whose objectivity in

determining wetlands is open to serious doubt, given the farm bureau's traditional opposition to wetlands regulations.

Senator Barbara Boxer has already indicated that she will help us in getting strong wetlands protection, but we also need help from Senator Dianne Feinstein who has not yet made her position known. **Write to Senator Feinstein** and urge her to do the following:

1. remove federal funding for mitigation banks and state regulation of wetlands from S. 1114. Funding for these programs would come out of existing EPA and Army Corps of Engineers budgets where it is used to help these agencies regulate wetlands
2. remove the language concerning "management entities" from the bill. All wetland regulation should be on a federal level; if state regulation is allowed, restrict it to the state level, but do not allow control to pass to local agencies.
3. determination of a wetland must remain under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA, but any definition of a wetland must take into account a study now being carried out by the National Academy of Sciences on how to define a wetland.

Senator Feinstein must hear from her constituents if she is to be persuaded to take a strong stand against this bill as it now exists. Write or call her at:

331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-3841

Current and Future Events

March 4, 5, 6: Great Outdoors Fair, S.E. Call the GGAS office to volunteer to help staff our booth.

March 7: S.E. Conservation Committee. 7:30 p.m. Call office for location

March 10: General Meeting. 7:30 p.m. "Cameroon." See back page for details

March 12: Symposium on Wildlife and Natural Resource Values of the Alameda Naval Air Station. 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. College of Alameda, 555 Atlantic Ave., Alameda. See front page for details

March 14: East Bay Conservation Committee. 7:30 p.m. GGAS office.

March 28: Board of Directors. 7:30 p.m. GGAS office.

April 16: Birdathon. Call Anna Marie Bratton for details. (415) 333-6580 (eve) or (415) 239-3429 (day)

August 13 - 29: Kenya Safari. Seventeen days of birds and wildlife in Kenya with Alan Hopkins. Masai Mara, Tsavo, Amboseli, Samburu, Lake Naivasha, Aberdares, North and South Coast and more. Cost: \$4,195 includes round-trip airfare from San Francisco and a \$200 donation to GGAS. Call Marcia or Tasha at Park East Tours: (800)223-6078.

SPEND AN APRIL DAY HOSTING AT AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

Sponsoring Audubon chapters take turns greeting weekend visitors at ACR during the nesting season. This year GGAS has drawn April, a month of mild weather, balmy breezes and migrating birds. It's a chance to spend a few hours outdoors in a lovely place while meeting some new people and promoting the wildlife. We need hosts for April 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24 and 30. Please help us out by calling (510) 843-2222 and volunteering for one (or more) of these days.

Observations

Daniel Singer

The mild weather of December continued throughout most of January making for wonderful birding weather. This is attested to by, among other things, the number and variety of insect-eating passerines reported this month and last. Though many birds found on our Christmas Bird Counts are presumed to be wintering, it is likely that many are late migrants slowly working their way south only to finally disappear as the weather becomes less hospitable and food sources more scarce. This winter may be different though as the continuing mild weather allows many of the wintering rarities to really "stay for the winter."

Two pelagic trips on Monterey Bay on 1/15 produced a nice variety of procellariiformes, including a remarkable 4 Laysan Albatross as well as 1 Flesh-footed, 8 Short-tailed and two Black-vented shearwaters (DHe, RN, ASH, DSg). An unidentified tropicbird was reported from a whale-watching boat off Santa Cruz on 1/31 (MC). Tropicbirds of any kind are very rare in California waters with most records (mostly of Red-billed) occurring far offshore between July and October. Winter records are almost unheard of, indicating a need for caution and careful documentation of any sighting.

The Eurasian form of Green-winged Teal was reported from Novato on 1/22 (DES, RJR). Up to 3 Tufted Ducks were reported from Sunnyvale Sewer Ponds through the 30th; another in San Francisco divided its time between Lake Merced, Stowe and Spreckels lakes through 2/5; and yet another was at Lake Merritt in Oakland from the 18th - 31st. Eurasian Wigeon, Oldsquaw, Barrow's Goldeneye and Hooded Merganser continued to be well-reported through the end of the month throughout the Bay Area. Two Common Mergansers at Lake Merced remained until at least 2/5 (m.ob.). An informal survey of ducks in San Francisco on 2/5 produced 18 species (DSg).

Raptor reports were unremarkable except for San Benito County's first modern record of Peregrine Falcon on 1/3 (DSu, RMrr, fide DSg) and the continuing presence of a Gyrfalcon in Del Norte County through 2/5 (m.ob.).

Up to 14 Lesser Golden-Plovers were at Point Reyes through 1/31. On 1/29 a state-wide survey of Mountain Plovers by approximately 100 observers resulted in a count of 3,436 (fide BBrn). Most of these (over 2,000) were found in Imperial County but relatively high counts were also obtained at the Carrizo Plain (587) in San Luis Obispo County, Solano County (242) and Yolo County (284). Recent population estimates for this species suggest there are only around 6,000 birds. Evidently most of these winter in California where much work needs to be done to clarify the species' ecological needs during the non-breeding season. The Mountain Plover's future currently holds great uncertainty, except perhaps for its eventual listing as an endangered species. A Solitary Sandpiper was reported from Santa Cruz County on 1/27 (MP). This species is extremely rare anywhere in California during the winter with only 2 or 3 previous records in our region. Thorough documentation of this sort of observation should be sent to the *American Birds* regional editors or, if appropriate, a local county compiler.

The adult **Common Black-headed Gull** found last November was still present at the Sunnyvale Sewer Ponds as of 1/31 (RMrr, m.ob.). Glaucous Gulls were well-reported through the month, especially along the coast. Up to 25 Black-legged Kittiwake were seen on 1/15 in Monterey Bay (ASH, DHe, RN), but there were very few other reports.

A Red-naped Sapsucker was in El Granada on 1/26 & 27 (BS fide RSTh, RSTh) and an apparent hybrid Red-naped X Red-breasted Sapsucker was seen in Lee Vining, Mono County, on 1/29 (ES). An Eastern Phoebe was discovered in San

Jose on 1/26 (SCR) and reported through February 1 (m.ob.). San Francisco's wintering Tropical Kingbird was still in residence at Lake Merced on January 22 (m.ob.) and the Cassin's Kingbird continued through 1/29 near the south end of Paicines Reservoir, San Benito County (DSg). This individual is spending its 4th consecutive winter at this locale.

A Townsend's Solitaire graced the old Chemistry Building at Stanford University on the 13th (SCR). One of the outstanding birds of the season must certainly be the **Sprague's Pipit** (complete with good details) reported from Merced NWR on January 16th (JF). This is the first mainland record for this species in our region and one of very few winter records for the state.

A Warbling Vireo found in Walnut Creek on 1/11 was still present through the 14th (MnS). Though relatively common as a migrant and breeder in appropriate habitat throughout much of Northern California, it is decidedly rare in winter. Many warblers initially found during the CBC period lingered into or through the month, most notably the Tennessee Warbler and Northern Waterthrush at Bodega Bay through the 30th (LLu); the **Black-throated Green Warbler** in Eureka through February 5 (DPo); and **Prairie Warbler** (LPe) and Black-and-White Warbler (RS) in San Francisco through the 10th. Two additional Black-and-White Warblers were discovered after the CBC period in Inverness and Eureka on January 21 and February 5 respectively (JDi, DPo); yet another one, reported on the 28th in Santa Cruz County, evidently had been present since before Christmas (JMa).

High numbers of Chipping Sparrows (up to 55) were present through the 29th in Solano County. The illustrious **Field Sparrow**, first discovered on the 4th, was still in residence in Martinez on February 1st (m.ob.). A report of **Black-chinned Sparrow** from Berkeley on February 3rd

(continued on page 21)

Field Trips Calendar

Wednesday, March 9

Mini-trip to Mitchell Canyon

Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 & Jean-Marie Spoelman
For details see *The Gull* for February.

Saturday, March 12

Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

Meet at 10 a.m. at Audubon Center in the Wildlife Sanctuary, 376 Greenwood Rd, Tiburon. From Hwy. 101 take the Belvedere/Tiburon exit; go east and turn right at the third traffic light, Greenwood Cove Rd., then take an immediate left.

There should be several thousand birds on the water and a variety of shorebirds. We may be able to see courting Western Grebes. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. From 10 a.m. until noon we will have a shoreline walk. From 1 p.m. until 2:30 we will look for birds along the trail, then relax with a slide show. The day will end with a brief tour of the historic Lyford House. Leader: Ranger, Bill Bixby (415) 388-2524. (*)

Saturday, March 19

San Francisco Bird Blitz

In last year's blitz participants reported 119 different species within the city limits. This year's mad dash, hoping to exceed all previous records, will begin at 7 a.m. sharp.

Meet at the north end of Van Ness Ave. (past North Point, the last cross-street) at the foot of Municipal Pier. From there we will caravan to other sites including Golden Gate Park, Sutro Baths, Lake Merced and Candlestick Point. Bring lunch and liquids. We will bird until dusk, then adjourn to a nearby restaurant where we will recap the day's observations, and, for a minimal cost, avoid going home to cook dinner. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. (*)

Saturday/Sunday, March 19-20

Honey Lake

Call for detailed directions. Trip will be limited to 20 participants. Lodging is available in Susanville; primitive camping is also available. Be sure to bring warm clothing, lunches for both days and a scope if you have one. We should see Sage Grouse, Bald Eagles, and other birds of the eastern Sierra. Leader: Bob Hirt (408) 446-4478. (*)

Saturday, March 26

Birds of Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the arboretum (near Ninth Ave. and Lincoln Way). We will be looking for spring birds that are attracted to this varied habitat. Beginners (and all others) welcome. Leader: Alan Ridley (415) 566-3241.

Saturday, March 26

Sunol Regional Park

Meet at 8:30 a.m. inside the park entrance at the parking lot on the left. Take I-680 south, turn off at Calaveras Rd. (the freeway

sign is marked "Calaveras Rd., Dumbarton Bridge, Calif. 84"). Go south (left) and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park, about five miles. Bring lunch and liquids. (Park regulations prohibit alcoholic beverages.) We should see Golden Eagles, a variety of winter residents and early spring migrants. This trip is also good for wildflowers. Leader: Gene Hull (510) 525-6893. \$ (*)

Sunday, March 27

Hayward Regional Shoreline

Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot at the Visitors' Center. From I-880 in the East Bay take the Jackson St. exit west toward the San Mateo Bridge, then take Clawiter exit. Continue across Clawiter and take an immediate left onto Breakwater. Continue on Breakwater to the Visitors' Center. From the West Bay, cross the San Mateo Bridge and take the Eden Landing exit, then left back across the freeway and left again on Breakwater.

We should see a variety of waterfowl and shorebirds, and perhaps migrating swallows. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 523-7108 (*)

Saturday, April 2

Bodega Bay

Meet at 9 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy 1 and East Shore Rd. (one-half mile north of Diekmann's Bay Store). We will bird for spring migrants at Bodega Harbor and Bodega Head, observing waterfowl and shorebirds in their spring plumage. Bring lunch and liquids.

If you arrive Friday, lodging is available at the Best Western Motel (707) 875-3525, and the Bodega Court Inn (707) 875-2217. There are nice campsites at the Dunes State Park (\$) just north of our meeting place, but plan to get there early to be sure of getting a spot, or call Ticketron to reserve one. Leader: Nancy Conzett (707) 875-2231. (*)

Sunday, April 3

Golden Gate Park Traditional Easter Walk CANCELLED

Saturday, April 9

Beginners' trip to Bothe-Napa Valley State Park

Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot. This is a particularly beautiful park in the spring, with migrating warblers and vireos, Winter Wrens and, if we're lucky, Pileated Woodpeckers. We will walk about four to five miles and bird mostly by ear. This trip is especially good for beginners.

From the East Bay drive north on I-80 beyond Vallejo and take the Napa exit. Follow Hwy. 29 to St. Helena. The entrance to the park is on the left just past the Ole Bale Mill north of St. Helena. From the West Bay take Hwy. 101 north to Hwy. 37 near Novato; go east to the junction with Hwy. 121; turn left and continue on 121 until it joins Hwy. 29 near Napa, then continue north on 29 to the park.

Field Trips Calendar *(continued)*

Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels trip. Please carpool if possible. Leader: Gene Hull (510) 525-6893 \$ (*)

Wednesday, April 13

Mini-trip to Sunol Regional Park.

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Ranger Station parking lot inside the park. See March 26 trip above for directions. We may see Lark Sparrows, Golden Eagles and Northern Orioles plus resident birds of the area. Bring lunch. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. \$ (*)

Plan Ahead:

Saturday, April 23

Sutter Buttes (Sacramento Valley)

Birds and wildflowers. Participation is limited and is by reservation only. A \$30 per person entrance fee is required to

support the Middle Mountain Foundation. Checks payable to GGAS must be received in the GGAS office by April 8th. Trip meets at 8:30 a.m. and ends between 3 and 4 p.m. Co-leaders: Lina Prairie (510) 549-3187 and biologist Don Schmoldt. For further information and directions, see the April *Gull*.

May 22

Monterey Bay Pelagic Trip

A late spring boat trip on Monterey Bay. Mark your calendar now and see the April *Gull* for details.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (*). See below.

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (510) 524-2399

Observations *(continued)*

was intriguing (NH_i). Is this species as rare in winter as the dearth of records suggest or could it be their retiring nature stymies our ability to detect it during periods when the males are not actively singing? I suspect it really is very rare in winter; nonetheless, it would be helpful to fully document all unseasonal occurrences of this poorly-known species until its status in winter and during migration is more fully understood. Swamp and White-throated sparrows continued to be reported in good numbers through the end of the period and the Harris' Sparrow was still at Putah Creek, Solano County, as of February 5th (RS).

A **Common Grackle** was observed in Capitola on 1/24 (DLSu) but unfortunately could not be refound subsequently. Red Crossbills were reported from Marin, San Francisco and Santa Cruz counties with a high count of 25 at PRNS on 1/20 (BoB, m.ob.). Lawrence's Goldfinch, largely absent from the region during most winters, was reported 4 times during the month from various East Bay foothill locations (m.ob.). Most

impressive was **60** on Mt. Hamilton on 1/22 (MJM).

I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge to all the readers of this column the excellent job that Ann Dewart has done in this space the past several years. She is now directing her talents towards editing *The Gull* (and, by the way, doesn't it look great?) and no longer has enough time in her busy schedule to write the Observations column. Thanks for all your great work, Ann!

Observers: Steve Allison, Stephen F. Bailey, Bob Barnes, Florence G. Bennett, Bob Brandriff, Matthew Coale, J. Scott Cox (JSC), Ann Dewart, Al DeMartini, Jack Dineen, Arthur L. Edwards, Alan M. Eisner, Richard A. Erickson, George Finger, John Fitch, Reid Freeman, Edward D. Greaves, Donna Heim, Alan S. Hopkins, Leslie Lieurance, John S. Luther, Michael J. Mammoser, John Mariani, Ian Mac Gregor, Robert V. Merrill (RMrr), Joe Morlan, Rod Norden, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Michael Perronc, David Powell, Robert J. Richmond, Mike M. Rogers, Steve C. Rottenborn, Barry Sauppe, Don E. Schmoldt, Doug Shaw, Daniel Singer (DSg), Rich Stallcup, Emilie Strauss, Maury Stern (MnS), David L. Suddjian, Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Anna Wilcox, David G. Yee, Bob Yutzy

Moonlight Cruise on the Bay

Join us on John James Audubon's birthday, Tuesday, April 26, for a sunset cruise on the Bay aboard Dolphin Charters' *Delphinus*. Under a nearly full moon we'll cruise from 7 to 10 p.m. along our Christmas Count route and into the Oakland Estuary. Food and drink will be provided as we look for birds and enjoy the ambiance of a spring

evening on the Bay. It promises to be a festive occasion.

Proceeds from the event will go to support GGAS conservation, education and field trip activities. Cost of the trip is \$49 per person which includes food and drink. To reserve a place, send your check made payable to GGAS to the office by April 15. Please join us for this delightful trip.

Back Yard Birder

Meg Pauletich

It was a beautiful spring-in-January day as I walked down the gulch trail to the beach near Bodega Bay. Seals were barking, ocean waves made occasional booms, wildflowers were confused (one California poppy was in bloom!) and pussy-willows sprouted fuzzy catkins. Wrentits buzzed along the creek along with Song Sparrows and California Towhees. With a domino-effect, the songs of White-crowned Sparrows cascaded down the gully. Every 35 feet or so a White-crowned sat atop a greasewood bush, surveying his territory. Since they are here all year around, I presume they must defend their space in winter as well as spring. How could such a sweet song be warning other males to "STAY OUT!"? To us, bird song is music to our ears

but to birds, songs proclaim ownership and even threats of violence. If songs are not heeded, the resident bird will use visual displays (such as a flash of epaulets by a Red-winged Blackbird), chases and combat. Even recorded songs or stuffed bird-mounts will cause these actions. When a bird attacks your window or hubcaps, he perceives his image as a rival.

The birds in my yard must also be warming up for courtship in this mild weather. Two Bewick's Wrens vied for the top of the weeping cherry tree, a perfect place for bird arias. A pair of Rufous-sided Towhees squabbled under the feeder and carried the argument through the junipers and into a cedar shrub before one bird retreated. Red-tailed Hawks have been screaming at each other as they fold their wings and attack at high speeds.

Territorial behavior has been noted in all animal, fish and bird species. It isn't always all about love, however. It can be defense of a nesting site or a food supply. The tiny hummingbird is a fierce defender of "his" feeder or flowers, attacking butterflies as well as other hummers. There are many types of territorial behavior and no rigid rules apply. Still, there are enough similarities that it makes a sort of sense. A territory is usually defined as an area which is mainly defended against members of the same species (along with predators, of course). The importance of territoriality was noted relatively recently (Howard, 1920). There are some birds, such as the Sharp-tailed Sparrow, which lack this urge; others, like wrens, are unusually feisty. Christopher Leahy notes the following types in *The Birdwatcher's Companion*:

1. The most common is a territory which is used by a pair to court, mate, feed and then rear their young. Most passerines prescribe to this form.

2. The size of the territory varies wildly. Some birds, such as colonies of seabirds, defend nothing but their nest area while Golden Eagles lay claim to 35 square miles or more.

3. Some birds, such as shorebirds, have a territory such as the first one, but will go further afield for food.

4. Male grouse have a courtship ground called a lek which they defend. Hummingbirds defend air space for performing their sky dances, aerial displays for the enjoyment of females.

Other types of territory include night roosts and winter territories.

Male birds are the usual defenders and maintainers of a territory. However, Leahy says, "Feminists will appreciate the female Eurasian Blackbird in England which refused to be courted within the boundaries set up by her mate, forcing him to

alter his invisible fences." Females which help their mates defend their territory tend to guard against other females, leaving her mate to deal with

To us, bird song is music to our ears but to birds, songs proclaim ownership and even threats of violence . . . Territorial behavior . . . isn't always all about love, however.

male intruders. Males generally arrive at their breeding areas ahead of the females, quietly staking out the best habitat before announcing with loud song that a certain plot belongs to them. Bright plumage adds to a display of dominance in some bird species. Certain postures also warn away intruders.

Different species occupying different niches in the same area are most often ignored, which similar species may elicit aggressive tactics. One exception is the feisty Marsh Wren which has been observed piercing the eggs of Red-winged Blackbirds with its sharp bill, apparently guarding against competition for nesting sites.

Why do animals have such strong territorial instincts? We can only surmise possible advantages and each species probably has its own uses. Here are the most likely reasons:

1. Distribution of bird life. From scientific observation, it has been noted that there are far more males than there are good territories. The establishing of territories provides a natural spacing which prevents overcrowding and food shortages.

2. Familiarity. Much time and energy is saved when a bird returns to familiar "stomping" grounds. It knows where to find food and nesting material; how to hide from and escape from intruders; and where a nest might best be located.

3. Mating efficiency. A pair of birds can court and mate within the boundaries of their "land" without being bothered by others. It is more efficient and strengthens pair bonds.

4. Protection. If nesting areas are more spread out, predators will find it more difficult to zero in on birds and their nests. Conversely, colonial nesters can feel secure that their sheer numbers will daunt all but the hungriest intruder.

As our real spring approaches, notice the interesting territorial disputes going on in your neighborhood.

News from the Ranch

Dan Murphy

RANCH OPENS: March 12 marks the beginning of the 1994 public season at Audubon Canyon Ranch. If you're a fan of all those baby egrets you'll just have to wait until May. But if early spring wildflowers excite you, if heron and egret courtship displays are of interest, if hiking a damp and quiet trail will restore you, March and April are great times to visit the Ranch.

RANCH PREVIEW: It's work day at the Ranch on March 5. Join our staff and friends as we get ready for the public season. You may get a chance to hike a trail or two. But most important to true friends of ACR is the FREE LUNCH! Do register in advance (415)868-9244. We need to hear from you to plan our work day and to plan lunch.

HOSTING AT THE RANCH: April is Golden Gate Audubon's month to host at ACR, but we can use volunteer hosts almost any time. Call the GGAS office at (510)843-2222 to sign up for April; call the ranch at (415)868-9244 if you have time and wish to give us a little extra help in those other months.

BOUVERIE GUIDED NATURE WALKS

Saturdays: March 5 & 19; April 2 & 9; May 7 & 28

Enjoy the wonders of spring at our beautiful Bouverie Audubon Preserve. Territorial birds will be singing, wildflowers will abound and early in the season the creek will be full. Join a BAP docent for one of our widely-acclaimed half-day nature walks. Registration is free. You can register at the beginning of the month preceding the walk of your choice. Call (707)938-4554.

SPRING SEMINARS

Participation in all seminars is by advance reservation only. Please call the Ranch at (415)868-9244 to register or for additional information.

Owl & Other Eyeshine

Saturday, March 19, Bouverie Audubon Preserve

Join Cathleen Cannon for a guaranteed look at some of our common but seldom-seen nocturnal predators. True, there's no guarantee of what you'll see or hear on the night walk, but the owls from Santa Rosa Bird Rescue will make seeing a sure thing. (\$20)

Spring Wildflowers, A Personal Introduction

Sunday, April 10, Bouverie Audubon Preserve

Wildflowers at the Bouverie Preserve are magnificent during spring and John Peterson is just the person to help you discover them. (\$30)

Spring Work Day at Cypress Grove Preserve

Saturday, April 30

If you've ever wondered how to get into Cypress Grove Preserve on Tomales Bay we've got the ticket for you. The place is incredible and all you have to do is help with a little gardening, maintenance or cleaning up. Like our other preserves, Cypress Grove doesn't take care of itself, so join with the ACR family for this work day. (Free)

See the April *Gull* or call the Ranch for details of May and June seminars.

Birdathon! Rides Again

Anna Marie Bratton

The 1993 Birdathon raised \$3,000 for Mono Lake. Thanks go to the team leaders, their tireless followers, and those generous folks who pledged money... and paid off their pledges. The great news is that it's that time of year again! Birdathon 1994 will be on Saturday, April 16. We'll need help from all of you to make this the most successful Birdathon yet.

Some of you may ask, "So, what's a Birdathon?" Well, it's a fundraiser where over 500 chapters nationwide raise money by birding on or around Audubon's birthday. For GGAS, the Birdathon means that teams of birders spend the day searching out as many species of birds as they can find. Team members, their non-birding friends, and many of you pledge an amount of money per species spotted by the teams.

Everyone wins in a Birdathon: National Audubon will get one-half of the money raised to use for the still on-going fight to preserve Mono Lake; GGAS will use the other half of the money to provide *Audubon Adventures* to local classrooms. Birders and pledgers also win. Chapters vie for prizes donated by National Audubon and this year there will be prizes for GGAS members to compete for as well. And above all, the birds win!!

Now, you may be saying, "So what can I do to help?" It's easy.

Here's what you do:

- Form your own team and gather total pledges of at least \$1.00 per species from your team-mates and non-birding friends. Remember, you can be as traditional or as wacky about this as you desire: plan a backyard picnic for family and friends and do a "Big Sit" counting all the species you see in a single place; invite a group of enthusiastic kids (some of those *Audubon Adventures* recipients maybe) and let everyone make some discoveries (no one says you have to count just birds -- how about a Big Critter Day); or maybe a Big Gull Day - hit the parking lots and the dumps and even the beaches and collect for the total number of individuals. The idea is to have fun and tap your friends for a great cause.

- Join Murphy's MOB (see April *Gull*)

- Do your laundry, go to the movies, or whatever else you normally do on a Saturday, BUT support Audubon by pledging any amount of money to the team of your choice.

There will be a pledge form in the April *Gull*. So make your plans, pledge and recruit, and call me at (415) 333-6580 to sign on.

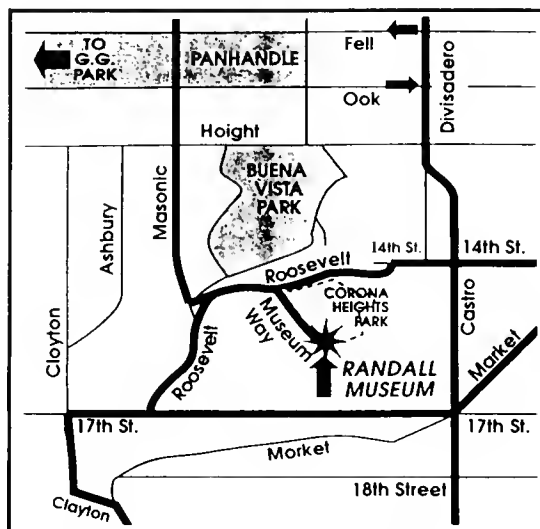
Thursday, March 10 7:30 p.m.
Josephine Randall Museum
199 Museum Way
San Francisco

Dr. Tom Smith will speak on the bird species diversity in the west African country of Cameroon at our March program in San Francisco. The slide program will begin at 7:30 p.m., 10th, at the Josephine 199 Museum Way, San

Boasting 850-Cameroon, with a wide ranging from lowland elevations, has the high- of any African country. what he has learned biodiversity can be rainforests, and we will ful slides which depict His observations are findings of other rainforest studies in Central and South America. Namely, that protecting transition areas between savannah and rainforest are crucial to protecting the species diversity of the tropical forest. This knowledge is reshaping how we “do” conservation.

Thursday, March 900 bird species, variety of habitats, rainforest to montane est species diversity Dr. Smith will share about how maintained in the be treated to beauti- this species diversity. corroborating the

The map is a hand-drawn sketch of a portion of San Francisco. It shows several streets: Claydon (vertical on the left), Masonic (vertical), Ashbury (vertical), Roosevelt (diagonal), and Market (diagonal). Horizontal streets include 14th St., 17th St., and 18th Street. A vertical street on the right is labeled Divisadero. At the top, there are labels for 'TO G.G. PARK' with an arrow pointing left, and 'Fell' and 'Ook' with arrows pointing right. A shaded area at the top is labeled 'PANHANDLE'. A shaded area in the center is labeled 'BUENA VISTA PARK'. A shaded area on the right is labeled 'CORONA HEIGHTS PARK'. A star is marked on Roosevelt Way, labeled 'RANDALL MUSEUM'. Other labels include 'Hoight', 'Roosevelt', 'Market', and 'Clayton'.



Tom Smith organized a team to go in and complete the first survey of a mountain range in Cameroon, which resulted in discovering range extensions of 16 bird species. He currently has projects in Africa, Indonesia, Hawaii and California. He is an assistant professor of biology at San Francisco State University. He has advanced degrees in wildlife ecology and evolutionary biology, for which he studied neotropical raptors in South American and Mexico, and finches in Africa.

Join us for a fascinating and informative evening with a topic that is on the cutting edge of conservation biology, complimented by images that will stimulate the senses. This is our last meeting in San Francisco until next October, so make sure to mark March 10th on your calendar.

ROSTER

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As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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